

Testimony regarding HB512
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Chairman Blessing, Vice Chair Reineke, Ranking Member Clyde, and members of the House Government Accountability and Oversight Committee, my name is Deborah Kruse Guebert, and I appreciate the privilege of speaking to the issue of preserving what is left of the freedom for parents to decide how to teach and train their own children.

The current regime of public education in the state of Ohio suffers already under the burden of thousands, probably tens of thousands, of pages of obscure legalese, with new bills of hundreds of pages being introduced almost weekly. Not surprisingly, education is now viewed almost universally as a burden, a hard slog through the mire, without inherent interest or value. Rather than experiencing the joy of learning and the satisfaction that comes from a job well done, students are expected to demonstrate grit and persistence by jumping through an incoherent and deliberately frustrating arrangement of hoops – just to acquire a piece of paper, a needed credential. Acquiring a base of meaningful, foundational knowledge that will enable our young adults to navigate more successfully through life is no longer the driving force of schooling. Instead, we subject them to vapid, politically motivated course material, socio-emotional learning, and endless hours of frustrating assessments to determine if they have been sufficiently programmed to respond as directed.

This bill will simply add more layers of complexity to the already overweening bureaucracy that substitutes for authentic local oversight for education. HB512 will make it even more impossible for those who know and care for children to make wise choices about how to bring them up to have satisfying and productive lives.

Anyone here who has any contact with teenagers will recognize the anomie that has settled over them like a dense fog. They are disaffected and disillusioned with the deadness of the system that now substitutes for learning. Yes, they are being schooled all right – schooled to follow detailed, but meaningless directions, schooled to obediently take their places as cogs in a state-directed workforce – not to develop the knowledge and wisdom that will allow them to lead lives of meaning and true satisfaction.

If we want our children to enjoy the basic freedoms that were once the birthright of every American, we must determine to decrease the burden of government regulation, not to increase it. We must work to return decision making to local levels where people can see for themselves the true effects of these decisions. We must refuse to accept directives from on high by government officials who are unreachable and out of touch with their communities. Above all, we must

avoid creating more contradictory and difficult to navigate red tape that strangles the healthy desire of young people to shape their own lives.

Passing HB512 adds yet another level of unaccountable bureaucracy. It attempts to consolidate power in a system that becomes more and more labyrinthine with every added government rule or regulation, a system that is already collapsing under its own weight and utterly failing in its purported goal – to give our children a foundation on which to build a good life.

Please do not continue to force us down the path to serfdom. Rather than introducing children to the good, the beautiful, and the true, we are allowing them to be shaped and indoctrinated by what is essentially a Marxist workforce-oriented worldview. Instead, I ask you to move in the opposite direction, to vote to support a bill like HB176, which attempts to repeal the enervating “progressive” outcome-based programming that currently crushes the hopes of our young people.

Thank you for your attention.

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